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(54) **ANIMAL GROOMING AIDS**

HILFSMITTEL ZUM BÜRSTEN VON TIEREN

ACCESSOIRES DE BROSSAGE D'ANIMAUX

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Description**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION****(1) Field of the Invention**

THIS INVENTION relates to animal grooming aids.

(2) Prior Art

One major problem with keeping pets, such as dogs and cats, is picking up the hair or fur (hereinafter called "hair") which they tend to shed onto furniture, the floors, clothing and the like. Even regular grooming with existing combs or brushes does not solve the problem as the combs or brushes do not remove the loose under-coat hair or fur as the fine fibres "slip" between the comb or brush teeth. (The very fine fur, if not removed, can result in fatal furballs in cats).

US-A-4 343 265 discloses an animal grooming brush where the bristles or teeth are made entirely of neoprene (a hard rubber). The present invention however is based on the use of latex rubber, for reasons which will become clear from a reading of this specification.

DE-A-35 07 698 discloses an animal grooming mitt of leather with protuberances of PVC stuck on the palm which can be considered a prior art for the mitt of claim 3, and the device of US-A-4 279 095 constitutes a background for the embodiment of claim 4.

The use of latex rubber in different products is known in various applications as follows:-

(a) BE 904752 - (Gillard) "discloses protective gloves with interchangeable accessories" where different accessories, e.g. (i) to wash dishes; (ii) scour a bathroom; (iii) to sand or polish furniture or a car body where gloves made of latex, rubber or other material "whose external surface exhibits a material for engaging and/or attaching any accessory". The gloves are designed to enable removable accessories to be fitted to the gloves, but there is no disclosure of the gloves per se being used to groom animals.

(b) WO87/04061 - (McLeish et al) discloses no more than a method of manufacturing a glove or mitten of rubber or plastic material, including "bonding a cleaning article or a secondary attachment means to at least the front finger wear of said glove or mitten". Again, there is no disclosure of the glove or mitten as an animal grooming aid.

(c) DE 3232313 - (Finke) discloses "a glove or mitten for oral-hygienic use" where different teeth and/or gum treatment devices (e.g. bristles, rubber naps, dental floss) are releasably securable to a finger position. "The operating space extends from the fingertip (Fingerbeere) through the Phalanx distalis (nail) and Phalanx media (middle part of the finger).

The width of the operating area covers the inner side of the finger in this area and extends for approximately 5 mm along the interdigital sides (sides of the finger)". A device for oral hygiene does not disclose a pet grooming aid.

(d) BR PI9000599 - (Loiola) is directed to a "practical and simple procedure for rubberizing of fabrics". "The process, performed cold, consists of applying a layer of latex, diluted in water and dried at room temperature, to both sides of the fabric. Application may be performed by means of a brush, rollers or immersion."

The rubberizing of fabric produced by the method has "utilization" for the manufacturing of inner tubes, balls, water beds, inflatable boats, tents and rucksacks.

There is no disclosure of the use of the rubberized fabric as an animal grooming aid.

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide at least one animal grooming aid where the finer hair or fur is easily removed from the animal's coat.

It is a preferred object to provide such an aid where the outer, thicker hair or fur will still be effectively groomed.

It is a further preferred object to provide such an aid which is inexpensive and easy to use.

Other preferred objects of the present invention will become apparent from the following description.

In one aspect the present invention resides in an animal grooming comb or brush where the bristles or teeth have a coating of latex rubber or like soft rubber.

In a second aspect, the present invention resides in an animal grooming mitt having a palm portion formed of, or faced by latex or other soft rubber and having short fingers projecting from said palm portion, said rubber projections having a high coefficient of friction with animal hair so as to facilitate the removal of an animal's hair during grooming by passing the mitt over or through an animal's coat.

In a third aspect, the present invention resides in an animal grooming aid attachable to, or formed integrally with, a cleaning head of a vacuum cleaner, the aid comprising a panel of latex rubber or like soft rubber covering the cleaning face of the head and having only a substantially central suction passage therethrough.

It is observed that the latex rubber has a high coefficient of friction with the soft, fine undercoat hairs on dogs, and the fur on cats, so it does not "slip" through between the teeth as easily as with uncoated plastic or wire teeth or bristles, and so the loose hair or fur is removed.

It is preferred that the teeth or bristles have at least a semi-rigid core, coated by latex rubber, to provide sufficient rigidity to the teeth or bristles, to enable the hair or fur to be removed from the animal's coat, latex

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rubber having insufficient mechanical strength to be used solely for the teeth or bristles.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

To enable the invention to be fully understood, a number of preferred embodiments will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG 1 is a perspective view of a first animal grooming comb in accordance with the present invention;
FIG 2 is a similar view of a second comb;
FIG 3 is a sectional end view taken on line 3-3 on FIG 1;
FIG 4 is a perspective view of a dog being groomed with the comb of FIG 1;
FIG 5 is a perspective view of a pet grooming mitt; and
FIG 6 is a perspective view of a pet grooming attachment for a vacuum cleaner.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to FIG 1, the comb 10 has a body 11 with a pair of foldable handles 12, 13.

The teeth 14 of the comb 10 are relatively widely spaced to enable the comb to be used to groom longer-haired dogs, eg. Golden Retrievers.

As shown in FIG 3, each tooth 14 has a spine 15 of at least semi-rigid steel or plastic wire surrounded by a layer of latex rubber 16 (or other suitable soft (or unmodified) rubber).

The latex rubber layer 16 does not, on close inspection, have a smooth surface, and it appears to be the combination of the rough surface and compressibility of the rubber which generates a higher co-efficient of friction between the teeth 14 and the fine under-hair 21 of the dog 20 (see FIG 4).

The teeth 14 of the comb 10 pass through the outer hair 22 without undue drag but pick up the loose under-hair 21 which is the major nuisance when a dog moults or sheds its coat.

To enable the teeth 14 of the comb 10 to more freely pass over the dog's skin, and to prevent undue wear of the latex rubber layer 16 at the tips of the teeth, small spheres of plastic 17 may be provided on the tips of the teeth 14.

Referring to FIG 2, the comb 30 has teeth 31, 32 at different spacings along the comb body 33 and the teeth 31, 32 have a construction as described with reference to, and as illustrated in, FIG 3. This comb 30 may be used on fine or shorter haired dogs or on cats.

As an alternative to combs 10, 30, brushes (not shown) may have bristles coated with the latex rubber 16.

As a further alternative, a glove or mitt 40 (see FIG

5) may be used. (In a simple form, a band, having a palm portion with strips or side bands and secured, eg. by the Velcro (trade mark), may be used.) The palm portion 41 is formed of, or faced by, latex or other soft rubber 42 and may have short fingers, teeth 43, bristles or undulations (eg. ridges and valleys) which, when the glove or mitt 40 is passed over or through the animal's coat, will pull free any loose hairs or fur therein.

To enable animal hair to be removed, eg. from carpets or furniture, an attachment 50 (see FIG 6) is moulded of latex rubber and fits onto the cleaning head 51 of a vacuum cleaner (not shown). the attachment 50 having an integral clip means to releasably secure it to the cleaning head. A central suction passage 52 allows the hair to be sucked into the cleaning head 51 once it has been loosened from the carpet or furniture.

It will be readily apparent to the skilled addressee that the present invention provides simple, inexpensive, and efficient animal grooming aids, where the unwanted loose fine hair or fur can be easily removed from an animal's coat.

Various changes and modifications may be made to the embodiments described without departing from the scope of the present invention defined in the appended claims.

Claims

1. An animal grooming comb (10) or brush where the bristles or teeth (14) have a coating (16) of latex rubber or like soft rubber.

2. A comb or brush as claimed in Claim 1 wherein:

small spheres of plastic (17) are provided on the tips of the bristles or teeth to provide low friction contact with the animal's skin while protecting the coating at the tips against undue wear.

3. An animal grooming mitt (40) having a palm portion (41) formed of, or faced by latex or other soft rubber (42) and having short fingers (43) projecting from said palm portion, said rubber projections having a high coefficient of friction with animal hair so as to facilitate the removal of an animal's hair during grooming by passing the mitt over or through an animal's coat.

4. An animal grooming aid (50) attachable to, or formed integrally with, a cleaning head (51) of a vacuum cleaner, the aid comprising a panel of latex rubber or like soft rubber covering the cleaning face of the head and having only a substantially central suction passage (52) therethrough.

5. An aid according to Claim 4 wherein the aid has integral clip means for releasable engagement with

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the cleaning head.

Patentansprüche

1. Kamm oder Bürste (10) zum Striegeln von Tieren, dessen bzw. deren Borsten oder Zinken (14) eine Beschichtung (16) aus Latexgummi oder vergleichbar weichem Gummi aufweisen. 5
2. Kamm oder Bürste nach Anspruch 1, wobei kleine Kunststoffkugeln (17) auf den Spitzen der Borsten oder Zinken vorgesehen sind, um die Haut des Tieres einer geringen Reibung auszusetzen und gleichzeitig die Beschichtung an den Spitzen gegen übermäßigen Abrieb zu schützen. 10 15
3. Handschuh (40) zum Striegeln von Tieren mit einer Handschuhinnenfläche (41), die aus Latex oder einem anderen weichen Gummi (42) gebildet bzw. mit Latex oder einem anderen weichen Gummi (42) beschichtet ist; der Handschuh (40) weist weiterhin kurze Finger (43) auf, die aus der Handschuhinnenfläche herausragen, wobei die Vorsprünge aus Gummi bei Tierhaaren einen hohen Reibungskoeffizienten besitzen; auf diese Weise wird das Entfernen eines Tierhaares während des Striegelvorganges erleichtert, indem man den Handschuh über oder durch das Fell des Tieres führt. 20 25 30
4. Striegelhilfe (50) für Tiere, die an einem Reinigungskopf (51) eines Staubsaugers befestigt werden kann oder damit einstückig ausgebildet ist, und die ein Feld aus Latexgummi oder vergleichbar weichem Gummi enthält, das die Reinigungsfläche des Kopfes bedeckt und in dem ein im wesentlichen zentraler Saugdurchgang (52) ausgebildet ist. 35
5. Hilfe nach Anspruch 4, die eine integrale Klammer-einrichtung zur lösbaren Verbindung mit dem Reinigungskopf aufweist. 40

Revendications

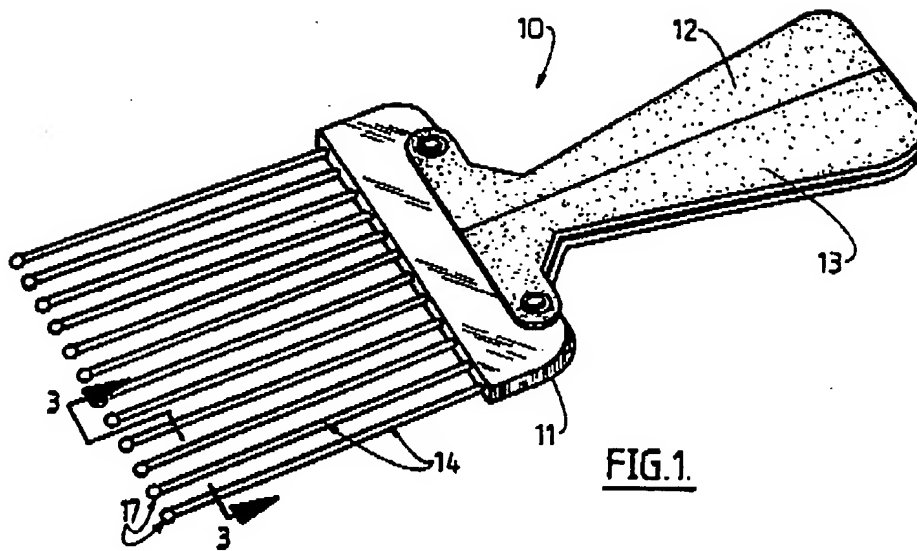
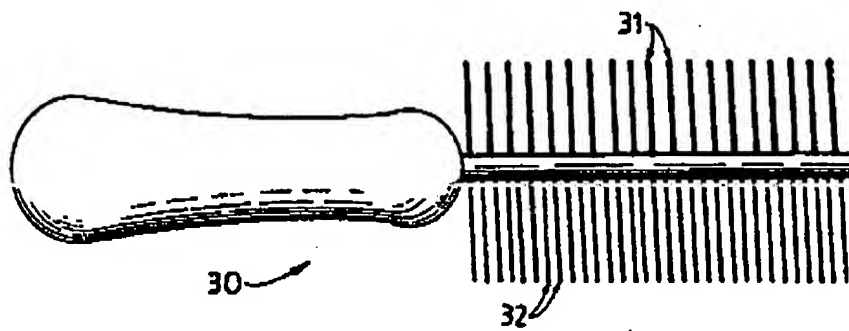
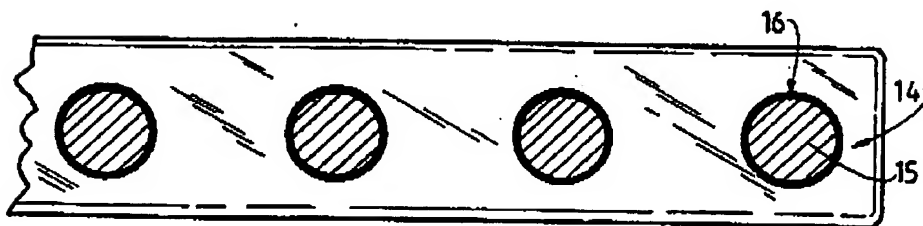
1. Peigne (10) ou brosse pour le brossage des animaux, dont les poils ou dents (14) comportent un revêtement (16) en caoutchouc latex ou en caoutchouc doux similaire. 45
2. Peigne ou brosse selon la revendication 1, dans lequel les pointes des poils ou dents sont pourvues de petites sphères (17) de matière plastique pour procurer un contact de friction doux avec la peau de l'animal tout en protégeant le revêtement des pointes contre une usure induite. 50 55
3. Moufle (40) pour brosser les animaux, ayant une partie de paume (41) faite en, ou recouverte de,

latex ou un autre caoutchouc doux (42) et présentant des doigts courts (43) faisant saillie à partir de la dite partie de paume, les dites saillies en caoutchouc ayant un fort coefficient de friction avec le poil de l'animal de façon à faciliter l'enlèvement de poils de l'animal pendant le brossage en passant la moufle sur ou à travers le pelage de l'animal.

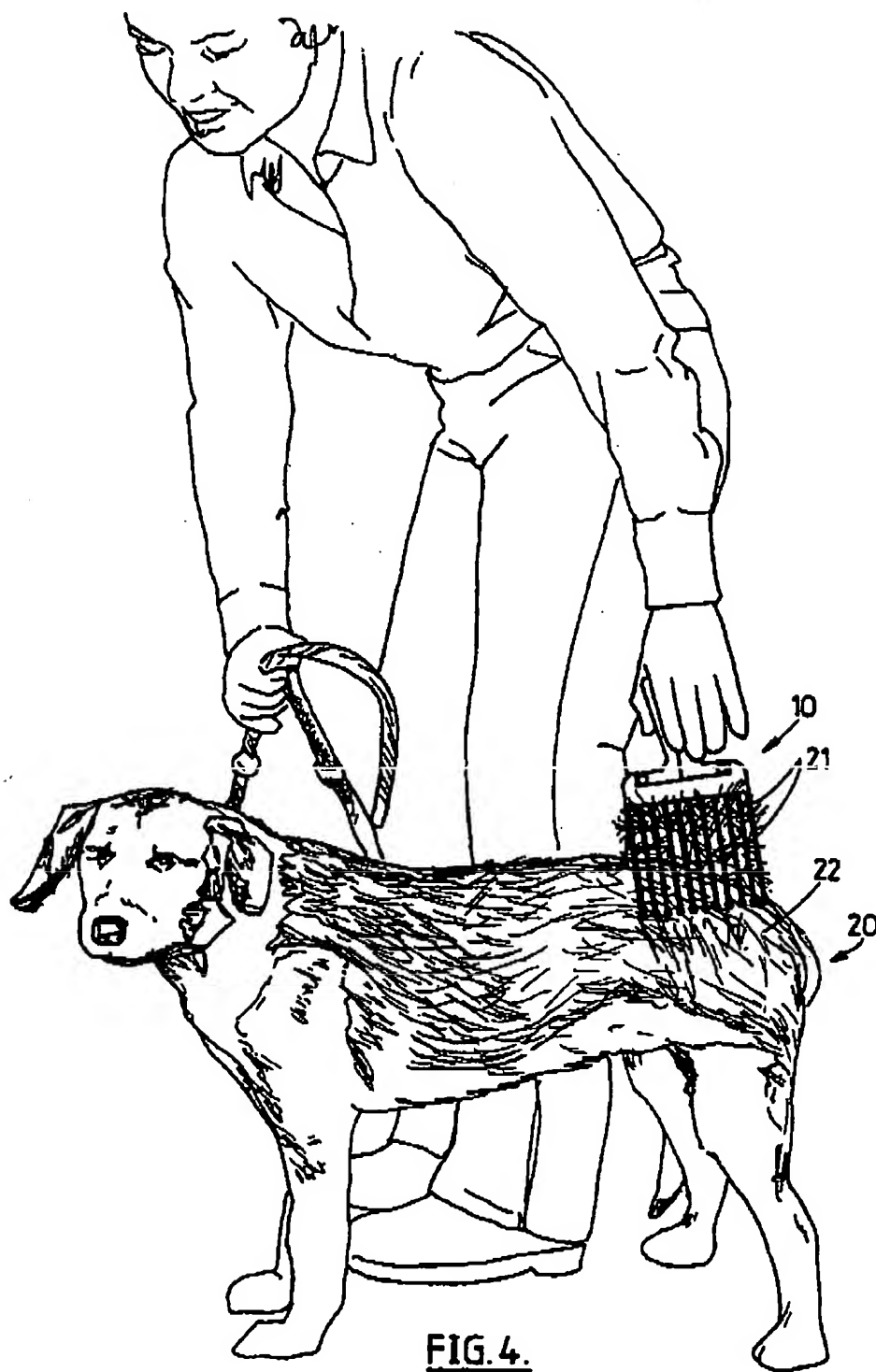
4. Accessoire (50) pour brosser les animaux, pouvant être fixé à une tête de nettoyage (51) d'un aspirateur ou être d'un seul élément avec celle-ci, cet accessoire comprenant un panneau de caoutchouc latex ou d'un caoutchouc doux analogue qui recouvre la face de nettoyage de la tête et qui est seulement traversé, sensiblement en son centre, par un passage d'aspiration (52).

5. Accessoire selon la revendication 4, dans lequel l'accessoire est solidaire d'un moyen d'attache destiné à engager de façon détachable la tête de nettoyage.

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FIG. 1.FIG. 2.FIG. 3.

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**FIG. 4.**

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